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Editorial comment: symposium: biologics and tissue healing in orthopaedics

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Symposium: Biologics and Tissue Healing in Orthopaedics

Editorial Comment: Symposium: Biologics and Tissue Healing in Orthopaedics

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The last three decades have seen tremendous technical growth in virtually every facet of orthopaedic surgery. Arthroscopy has increased our ability to access and instrument joints less invasively, and new tools and approaches in trauma and spine surgery have decreased the morbidity associated with exposure and soft-tissue dissection. Fixation devices for fracture and soft-tissue repair have likewise improved, with more-rigid implants and pull-out strengths that far exceed typical physiological loads. Advances like these have helped surgeons restore anatomy and function as well as to expedite recovery with reduced morbidity and fewer complications.

Despite these successes, however, the ability of musculoskeletal tissues to heal remains a weak link. The inability to recapitulate the native architecture of the enthesis remains a

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considerable challenge in ligament reconstruction and rotator cuff repair surgery. This is one of the predominant reasons for structural failure after surgical repair or reconstruction. Joint preservation remains a daunting challenge in spite of improved recognition of focal chondral injury, as our current techniques do not reliably regenerate organized, hyaline cartilage. The next step in musculoskeletal surgery will require an improved understanding of tissue biology in order to develop therapeutic avenues to augment healing.

We are proud to present a series of articles that focuses on biologics and tissue healing in orthopaedics. These studies present important primary research on both growth factor and cell-based strategies to augment healing responses to both injury and surgical repair. The use of biomarkers to help guide decision-making in joint preservation is also reviewed. These considerations will be of paramount importance as we continue to make efforts to improve the quality of our structural and functional outcomes for challenging orthopaedic conditions. We thank the authors who have contributed to this symposium.